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THE PILOT!

Panama City Pilot

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YULETIDE

Ere another visit of the PILOT Christmas will have come again, that glorious, generous, world wide Christian festival, with its wealth of hospitality, good cheer, and precious memories.

"The belfries of all Christendom now roll along the unbroken song of 'peace on earth, good will to men' says one writer, and another 'This day shall change all griefs and quarrels into love.'"

For nearly twenty centuries Christian nations have observed this day as the birthday of Our Saviour, while from the earliest days of man upon this earth, he has celebrated with rejoicing and mirth this Winter season, when the Sun with its revivifying power, wheels in its southern course, and once again moves on its journey northward, bringing nearer with each opening day the return of the verdure, fruits, and joys of Spring.

It is preeminently a time of kindly feeling, of home comings, and feasting. Commerce is checked for a brief period, the toiler rests and home reigns supreme. To the children it is a day that has been longingly looked for and its many joys anticipated. None are so poor as to be unmindful of this children's chief holiday, or so neglected as not to receive some slight token of this Natal day which abounds in "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men."

Many have sung of Christmastide, but none more grandly than that British poet who seventy years ago published a Christmas Hymn that will be read and sung as long as this old earth shall remain the habitat of man. We herewith reproduce it.

A Christmas Hymn.

ALFRED DOMETT.

It was the calm and silent night!
Seven hundred years and fifty three
Had Rome been growing up to might,
And now was queen of land and sea.
No sound was heard of clashing wars—
Peace brooded o'er the hush'd domain;
Apollo, Pallas, Jove, and Mars
Held undisturb'd their ancient reign,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago.

'Twas in the calm and silent night!
The senator of haughty Rome,
Impatient, urged his chariot's flight,
Triumphant arches, gleaming, swell
His breast with that's of boundless sway,
What reck'd the Roman, what befell,
A paltry province far away,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago?

Within that province far away
Went plodding home a weary boor;
A streak of light before him lay,
Fallen through a half-shut stable door
Across his path. He pass'd—for naught
Told what was going on within;
How keen the stars, his only thought—
The air how calm, and cold and thin,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago.

O, strange indifference! low and high
Drownd over common joys and cares;
The earth was still—but knew not why
The world was listening, unawares.
How calm a moment may precede
One that shall thrill the world forever.
To that still moment, none would heed,
Man's doom was link'd no more to sever—
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago!

It is the calm and solemn night!
A thousand bells ring out, and throw
Their joyous peals abroad, and smite
The darkness—charmed and holy now!
The night that erst no name had worn,
To it a happy name is given;
For in that stable lay, new-born,
The peaceful Prince of earth and heaven,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago!

Christmas Eve in Town is the subject of a dainty conceit in poetry, in McClures for December, wherein is described most faithfully, the cities' streets the night before Christmas. We give it herewith.

Christmas Eve in Town.

MARY ROBERTS RINEHART.

For some, the hedges banked with snow,
The yule-log's flame, the quiet night:
For me, the crowds that come and go,
The noisy street, the cheery light,
The faker's call, the mistletoe,
The snow that falls so softly down,
The toy-shop windows all aglow—
Ah, this is Christmas Eve in town!

Let those who will sit close to-night
Draw up their chairs, and hug the blaze;
For me, the gay electric light,
The carnival of the holidays;
The Christmas buyers, clutching tight
Their bundled gifts, and on the breeze
That pungent promise of delight,
The piny smell of Christmas-trees.

See, here are angels' fluttering wings,
And in that window, on the walls,
Are gold and silver tinsel strings,
With red and green and yellow balls.
Let those who will, be old to-night—
I'll sally forth upon my way;
For, though it's covered hoary-white,
The town is young on Christmas Day!

The PILOT will conclude its selections of Christmas poetry by printing an unpublished poem, written years ago by one who was the writers first "Santa Claus;" one who long since passed "over the river" to where the Love and Peace of Christmas is eternal.

The Christmas Gathering.

PHILANDER B. WEST.

The Storm King that unwelcome guest,
Our pathway, hearth and home may crowd
With shapeless drifts, the fleecy cloud
But half conceals resplendent worlds—
The buried flowers in quiet rest—
Our boreal zone enrobed in white,
When mantled for the winter night,
Aroreal banners oft unfurls.
Within, where blest contentment reigns,
In social circle kindly meet
Kindred and friends, tho' incomplete
The greetings, 'til the festive board
With care is spread, and naught remains
To mar the pastimes of the hour—
What tho' perchance some dark cloud lower
Soon are bright sunny beams outpoured.
And when the light of other days
Is kindled, thoughts to memory dear
Of olden time, and right good cheer,
Enliven both the old and young—
While many a quaint and canny phrase,
And wit that long in silence lay,
Which gives to mirthful passions play,
Unravels webs of thought unsung.

And now the PILOT will wish its readers "A Merry Christmas," with most abundant cheer on this most exalted holiday, trusting that its boundless joys and happiness may continue with each and all throughout the year.

Harbor Improvement.

is no longer a local issue. Those citizens and possibly officials who have so treated it in the past should at once disabuse their mind of this error. Heretofore it has been solely a local matter. Now and hereafter it is a question in which important portions of three states are interested.

Though every loyal citizen of St Andrews Bay be desirous of seeing it opened up to such a commerce as its depth and capacity warrant, yet that is but a trifle as compared with the immense territory that is to be so largely benefitted when this is an accomplished fact.

This is a vital question to that wealthy and thickly populated portion of Alabama and Georgia tributary to this port. These states are already suffering a severe check in growth and progress through lack of transportation facilities. The entire central Lower South is looking to the improvement of this harbor for relief from long, expensive, and roundabout rail shipments.

It is a Macedonian cry for help. Local gain sinks in to insignificance when compared with a call from hundreds of thousands of people for aid in a matter so affecting and interwoven with their present success and future progress, and if longer ignored will dwarf and hinder the healthy growth of this entire section.

St Andrews Bay is no longer a local waterway. Railways have brought it home to many a prominent city and wealthy farming country. Hereafter these people will call it "our harbor," and make that goodly use of it that Nature fitted it for.

Hotel Changes Hands.

The Panama City Hotel has this week been sold by Mr and Mrs W. W. Green, to W. A. Crawford and wife. Negotiations looking toward such a transaction have been in progress for some time but were not concluded until this week. Mr and Mrs Crawford take possession of the house to-day. The PILOT wishes them success in their new venture.

The Mails.

This stereotyped heading may be seen in about every newspaper. It would be a pleasure were the PILOT now and then able to report some improvement in the service, but it seems to be going rapidly from bad to worse, if it were possible to do so.

Much of the mail, not all of it, that should have reached the bay Friday night, being Thursdays bay country mail into Chipley office, did not reach St Andrew until Tuesday morning, and here Wednesday morning, 24 hours later. Two mails a week from the railway is about all we are getting at present.

It would seem as though the Post Office Department might find some way of getting the large and important mails for Panama City and Millville from St Andrew, but three and five miles away, in less than 24 hours. But they are not doing it.

As the PILOT has stated before, the only remedy is for each one interested to write the Senators and Representatives from this State, at Washington, stating conditions as they exist here, and requesting them to take the matter up with the Post Office Department. By doing so the matter can be remedied.

The Post Master General in his recent report suggested that the Department should have a General Manager. Judging from the impotency of the Department as displayed hereabouts the PILOT seconds the recommendation.

Some of Panama City's sportsmen have arranged for a shooting match to take place at this point on Christmas Day. Prizes will be given to the best marksman. There will also be a cash prize for the one making the best score.

Oysters are in prime condition at present and Mr Dykes is bringing some fine ones here every day or so. They were never better than just at present, and a good St Andrews Bay oyster cannot be equalled.

H. M. Felix has bought a tract of land on Freshwater bayou, of Mr Kinney, and is preparing to build him a house thereon. He is getting out the material at Millville.

I. G. Shores has been building chimneys at the PILOT office, and General Office of the Gulf Coast Development Company this week.

Beach Combings.

E. M. Goodson made a business trip to Gay on Tuesday.

The Misses Willis, of Gay, were shopping here yesterday.

M. G. Post of St Andrew was a caller in Panama City this morning.

A. J. Gay, of Gay stopped over Wednesday on business.—Chipley Verdict.

A. J. Gay, of Gay, was a visitor here Saturday evening, returning home Sunday.

T. D. Sale was in from Southport yesterday en route to Pensacola.—Chipley Verdict.

J. E. McKenzie left on yesterdays Tarpon for an extended visit to friends in Georgia.

Mrs O. P. McKenzie left on yesterdays Tarpon for a visit with relatives and friends at Cordele, Ga.

A. Hogeboom, road overseer, is again working the roads on account of damage done by the rains.

M. D. Howlett, the popular Crompton photographer, made the PILOT office a pleasant call yesterday.

G. B. Thompson left this morning for Marianna and points on the railway. He expects to be back within a week.

J. B. Hogeboom made a trip to Chipley this week, bringing back Miss Sheppard, and Mr and Mrs Cummings.

Mrs E. M. Goodson and Mrs A. A. Sheffield left last Friday morning for Dellwood, Fla., to visit Mrs Goodson's sister, who is very ill.

W. H. Parker, of Parker, and Henry Oliphant, of Illinois, were Panama City visitors on Monday. The PILOT office is indebted to the gentlemen for a pleasant call.

H. H. Mock returned yesterday from a trip in Jackson county, of the country and all of the roads in an almost impassible condition.

McKenzie & Co have some pretty pieces of china ware and glass sets suitable for Christmas presents, together with many articles of wearing apparel, handkerchiefs, ribbons &c.

Dr. Hill and wife of Greenwood Fla. have been stopping the past week with the Crawfords. It is possible the doctor may conclude to settle here. He will be heartily welcome.

J. I. Cumings and wife, of Old Mission, Mich., reached here on Tuesday evening by way of Chipley, for a winters stay upon the bay. Mr Cummings is a nephew of Mrs J. B. Hogeboom with whom they are stopping.

Bear in mind that G. L. Fenters & Co., have a fine assortment of Panama City souvenirs in the way of shell work, fancy wood work, vases, and articles of various kinds suitable for Christmas presents, as well as a fine stock of Lowneys famous candies.

Our old townsman Tom Thompson, with his wife and daughter, passed through here on yesterdays Tarpon bound for Apalachicola, on a visit to his brother Berry. The boat was here long enough for Tom to shake hands with a few of the boys.

The safe for the bank of Panama City arrived on yesterdays Tarpon, and is today being moved to the temporary quarters of the bank in the front part of the PILOT office. It is a heavy affair and looks as though it would safely hold at least a portion of Panama City's money.

Mrs. S. Fenters, of Farndale, came here Monday evening to await the arrival on yesterdays Tarpon of her daughter, Mrs. George Clark of Ft. Bayou, Miss. and her three children, who will possibly remain on the bay during the winter. They all left on this mornings mail boat for Farndale.

The PILOT is indebted to W. L. Cawthon, the popular and successful banker of DeFuniak Springs, for a very neat diary for 1908. Our West Florida country banks have set an example in this financial scare that is well worthy of imitation by city bankers. By their stand they have put out of by business the "loss of confidence" that has affected city banks so disastrously, and kept right on doing a normal banking business. All honor to them.